

Dear Judge Sippel,

I would first like to introduce myself. My name is Kathy S., and I am a compulsive gambler and placed my last bet on 31DEC10. In Gamblers Anonymous we only go by our first name and the first letter of our last name, hence "Anonymous". Gamblers Anonymous is also referred to as "GA".

Many people don't understand this disease and mainly due to basically throwing out our hard-earned money. Why would anyone do such a thing? In reality, this disease is no different than that of an alcoholic or a drug addict. The mindset is exactly the same, but the only differences are that we can hide it much better than those that abuse substances and it's a different vice.

This disease can affect all walks of life, as we have seen lawyers, doctors, priest, accountants, laborers, and others come to GA meetings and this is from a firsthand account of going to GA meetings for twelve years.

This disease is an emotional disease that for whatever reason a person feels there are problems in their life that they just want to "put our heads in the sand", so to speak and forget about the issues. Many times, compulsive gamblers are escape gamblers and just don't want to live life on life's terms. At times folks cannot really pinpoint why they gambled, but rather just want to escape life. This is usually the case for those that abuse substances too.

In my case, it was my father passing away, who was the glue that held my dysfunctional family together. Once he passed; it was a free for all for dysfunction to occur. I really didn't know how to handle this and once I was introduced to gambling as a way to escape, boy did I!

This disease can take you down roads you never dreamed that you would do. In my case, I took cash out on my credit cards and even used those checks that they send in the mail that are earmarked for very high interest rates. I took a second mortgage on my home and took the max amount allowed for my student loans, to which I am still paying to this day and will be for a while to come. I was also able to secure loans and payday loans at a high interest rate.

The final straw and my rock bottom were having two regular loans and eleven payday loans. That made me realize that this is complete insanity that is occurring. In our book that we read at our GA meetings, there is a passage that states "Compulsive gambling can lead to insanity, prison, or death". Well, I was definitely on my way there and I knew then that I had reached rock bottom and needed help and there is where GA came into play.

The bottom line is that the money is our "fix" for the next bet. Absolutely no respect for money whatsoever. This is very similar of drugs for a drug addict or the next drink for an alcoholic.

I am writing this so that you may better understand the depths of this disease and where it can take you. I had the pleasure of meeting Maureen W and Donna T at our Friday and Tuesday night meetings. These ladies are working diligently to make a character change in their lives. They show up to meetings and actually enjoy these meetings (even though being ordered to attend). They know that we are not there to judge them or anyone else. We as compulsive gamblers "Get It" as to where this disease can take you.

In closing, if you would like any more information in regard to this matter, please reach out to either Maureen or Donna and they can contact me.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy S." with a stylized flourish at the beginning.

Kathy S. (GA member)